

Communist Party of Australia

Central Committee

General Secretary: Andrew Irving
President: Vinnie Molina

74 Buckingham St
Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia

Ph: +61 2 9699 8844
Fax: +61 2 9699 9833
Email: president@cpa.org.au
Web: www.cpa.org.au



Contribution by the Communist Party of Australia

By General Secretary Andrew Irving.

Comrades,

On behalf of the Communist Party of Australia, I would like to thank the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and Communist Party of Turkey and send our warmest greetings to them for facilitating this internet conference of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

At our last meeting held in 2019, a significant theme was a celebration of the centenary of the founding of the first Communist International.

The theme for the CPA's contribution to this meeting will focus on two important issues that will continue to affect the workers in all countries.

Firstly, the COVID pandemic. The CPA's efforts to respond and deal with the effects of this ongoing crisis.

The capitalist system once again shows its priority is always increasing profit and finding new ways to intensify the exploitation, directing the burdens and risks onto the workers who are the providers of the services, essential welfare support and sustenance to society that allows all states to exist and who are always at the front line of the dangers of infection and death.

Second is the most recent escalation in the international imperialist campaign against the peoples of our Asia Pacific Region. The AUKUS agreement and the Australia's government drift towards supporting a War to end all wars and the threat to all life.

COVID a Crisis not just a Pandemic.

Communist Party of Australia determined to tackled this threat early and adopted a policy and set of principles from the start of the COVID pandemic, in early April 2020, to campaign to protect the workers and community under the slogan "Health, Workers' Rights and Socialism.

As was the case in most Western Countries the Covid-19 pandemic crisis showed the failure of capitalism and the inadequacy of the under resourced health systems. In Australia the government spends \$100,000,000 a day on the military. Money that needs to be spent on the people. The capitalist system was too slow to act, failing to prevent thousands of deaths, suffering and despair world-wide and has allowed capital to act under the market and allows it to operate as it sees fit in the name of profit to the detriment of what is required to protect the community and social health.

The CPA knows that the only responsible and effective solution is to replace the current system with one that will give priority to the health, safety and economic well-being of all, a socialist system.

Our party continued the fighting for working class people during this time of crisis by continuing the campaign for workers' rights. The CPA stated that workers should not be asked to sacrifice their health and safety for the communities' health and to maintain vital supply chains.

The only way this could happen is that the CPA keep the party functioning.

Leading Party bodies and branches were asked to continue their meetings even if just online. There was regularly distribute of information about comrades' initiatives, actions and campaigns. Online campaigns became more important, detailed, and colourful. Our paper the Guardian and the party social media sites played a leadership role in this strategy.

To making sure the **Workers will not pay for this crisis or recovery**

The struggle was for workers playing the leading role and control on the job for implementation of the strongest possible safety measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19. To make sure there is a priority for appropriate PPE including the provision of high-quality face masks with the need for physical distancing measures in workplaces. Payment for all Covid-19 related absences.

This crisis has shown that the reversal of all privatisations and that public ownership of all major industries and services is essential to a sustainable and positive future.

Like many other countries governments did not address the significant shortages equipped to care for COVID-19 patients, due to limited access to supplies such as gloves, medical masks, respirators, goggles, face shields, gowns, and aprons that left doctors, nurses, and other frontline workers dangerously exposed.

The government in the end was forced to support people who could not work or get a job to survive during the crisis.

The government introduced for a period a JobSeeker allowance (unemployment benefit) of \$1,130 per fortnight and also a JobKeeper allowance of \$1,500 per fortnight which was, at that time, double the old below poverty line, unemployed payment. But they left many workers behind.

During this crisis the CPA recognised a priority to actively campaigned in the struggles internationally of workers confronting this dangerous pandemic and also focusing on solidarity with the countries under sanction and blockade that have limited or no access to medical supplies medicines and equipment, including Cuba, Syria, Iran, Venezuela, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and many more. This global pandemic highlights the inhumane caricature of these sanctions. The task is to end these criminal blockades and allow countries to import essential supplies.

AUKUS

The Communist Party of Australia from the start has played the leading political role in the establishment of national and international campaigns against AUKUS.

The Party has urged all its members and supporters to actively oppose the conservative Australian Government's decision to join the AUKUS Agreement; to buy nuclear-powered submarines; to purchase cruise missiles and other offensive weapons; and to host more US troops, warships, weapons, and planes on Australian soil.

AUKUS is a new military pact between Australia, the UK and the United States. It was negotiated secretly. In fact, it has been suggested that only 8 leaders of the federal Government were privy to this decision that was suddenly presented to a shocked world.

Its major component is the agreement to transfer US technology, but not control, of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia. In the past this technology has only ever been transferred to the UK.

AUKUS needs to be seen in the context of the Quad, an alliance of Japan, India, the US and Australia, which dangerously intensifies geostrategic military tensions with China, which is fuelling a spiralling arms race, and also increases the dangers of accidents or miscalculations which can trigger escalation to a catastrophic war which could destroy the human species and the planet.

The AUKUS, QUAD & AUSMIN agreements are manifestations of the US efforts to retain economic and political power in the Asia-Pacific region a continuation of Obama's pivot to Asia. We ask how Australia's 'national security' is enhanced by exorbitant spending on planes, warships, submarines, and land vehicles, totalling more than half a trillion dollars over ten years?

In reality such spending will make Australia poorer and less secure.

Australian taxpayers are being asked to pay a minimum bill of \$100 billion for the suggested 8 submarines including the cost of new bases for the submarines and other infrastructure, maintenance, handling of nuclear fuel, and training crews.

We are told that the new nuclear-powered submarines will start to be supplied in 2040 and finish by 2060. Putting them well outside of our strategic consideration and it is possible they will be obsolete by then.

Paying for all this will steal resources that are urgently needed elsewhere for vital areas like public health, public housing, public education, the environment and much more. Few if any jobs will be created for Australian workers, especially since our ship building workforce has no experience with building nuclear powered vessels.

Figures from Brown University research show that US\$1 million spent on defence creates 6.9 jobs, US\$1 million spent on health care creates 14.3 jobs, and US\$1 million spent on education creates 19.2 jobs.

AUKUS will also impact Australian trade. While not stated explicitly, AUKUS is clearly aimed at China. But Australia's sales to China exceed the total of its next four biggest trading partners. This is not a trading relationship Australia can afford to compromise or lose without any substantial reason.

An additional problem created by AUKUS is that political and military figures in allied countries such as India, South Korea and Japan who have already asking why they were denied the same capabilities.

In resurrecting a new cold war this time against China, the US is pushing, Australia to sign up to be in the front-line of another US war this time with China.

Nuclear reactors come with the possibility of disastrous accidents or miscalculations which could trigger a catastrophic war which could destroy humanity and our planet. They can suffer accidents and collisions.

AUKUS threatens the stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region and makes Australia complicit in dangerous regional tensions and conflict. Indonesia and Malaysia, have expressed strong opposition

Countries in our region do not want to have to choose sides, do not want an arms race in the region, and do not want to be involved in fighting proxy wars for the US.

The peace movement is united and acting around the slogans no nuclear submarines, no nuclear power, no nuclear weapons, no AUKUS, no war on China.

Following a Meeting of the Communist Party of Australia, the Communist Party of Britain and the Communist Party of the USA on 1st October a joint statement was issued which was published on Solidnet.

The emerging coalition that is denounces the QUAD and AUKUS alliances which are dangerously intensifying geostrategic military tensions with China. Rather the U.S.-Chinese must seek broader international cooperation to reverse the existential threats of nuclear weapons, the climate emergency, and the pandemics. The strategic competition between the great powers includes the danger of a great power war which will destroy the planet.

In raising these examples of struggle in Australia and in our region the question is how the fraternal parties that are members of Solidnet can become involved, set priorities and whether it is willing to unite and respond with campaigns that represent a Vanguard position.

Finally on behalf of the Communist Party of Australia I invite all Participants here to send greetings to our delayed 14th Congress which will now be held on 25-27 February 2022. Your greetings are welcome from now until 15th February 2022. Thank you!

Long Live the Communist Party of Turkey and Communist Party of Greece (KKE)
Long Live the Communist International
Long Live Proletarian Working-class Internationalism